



Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development

**READING AT TERTIARY EDUCATION : EXTENSIVE
READING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

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READING AT TERTIARY EDUCATION: EXTENSIVE READING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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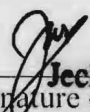
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Final Year Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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A project entitled **Reading at Tertiary Education: Extensive Reading and Academic Achievement** was written by Shakirah Binti Md Lazim and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science with Honours (Teaching English as a Second Language).

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ABSTRACT

Reading at Tertiary Education: Extensive Reading and Academic Achievement

Shakirah Binti Md Lazim

This study sought to find out whether there is a relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement among the students of five programs in FCSHD in general, and specifically according to gender and programs differences. A 6 item questionnaires were administered to a group of 139 students who made up the sample of this study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study. Pearson Correlation was use to compute the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement, while Regression Analysis was used to find out the best predictor of TESL/ ESL students' academic achievement. The result showed that there is a statistically significant weak relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement in general ($r = .257, p < .01$). The result also showed that the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement is different according to gender and programs. For male students, the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement is a very weak relationship ($r = .189, p > .05$), while for female students, the relationship is a moderate relationship ($r = .408, p < .01$). According to program differences, the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement of TESL/ ESL students is a very weak insignificant relationship ($r = .084, p > .05$), the same with Mathematics' ($r = .056, p > .05$). For Cognitive Science, there is an insignificant relationship ($r = .317, p > .05$). A moderate relationship exists between extensive reading and HRD students' academic achievement ($r = .490, p < .01$), the same for Counseling students' ($r = .537, p < .05$). The result also indicated that the best predictor of TESL/ ESL students' academic achievement is the Course PBT2152 Techniques in ELT: Reading ($t = 3.578$).

ABSTRAK

Pembacaan di Pendidikan Peringkat Tertiri: Pembacaan Meluas dan Pencapaian Akademik

Shakirah Binti Md Lazim

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan samada terdapat perhubungan di antara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik di kalangan para pelajar dari lima program di Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia secara umum dan secara spesifik mengikut perbezaan jantina dan perbezaan program pengajian. Satu soal selidik yang mengandungi 6 item telah diedarkan kepada sekumpulan 139 pelajar yang menjadi sampel kajian ini. Pengiraan statistik deskriptif dan inferensi telah digunakan untuk menganalisa data kajian. Ujian Pearson Correlation telah digunakan untuk menentukan perhubungan diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik, manakala Regression Analysis telah digunakan untuk menentukan faktor terkuat yang mempengaruhi pencapaian akademik pelajar- pelajar TESL/ ESL. Hasil kajian menunjukkan secara amnya terdapat perhubungan lemah yang positif diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik ($r = .257, p < .01$). Perhubungan diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik berbeza di kalangan jantina dan program- program. Bagi pelajar lelaki, perhubungan yang sangat lemah wujud diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik ($r = .189, p > .05$), manakala bagi pelajar perempuan, perhubungannya ialah perhubungan yang sederhana ($r = .408, p < .01$). Bagi perhubungan diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik pelajar TESL/ ESL, perhubungannya adalah sangat lemah ($r = .084, p > .05$), begitu juga bagi pelajar- pelajar Matematik ($r = .056, p > .05$). Bagi pelajar Sains Kognitif, perhubungan diantara pembacaan meluas dan pencapaian akademik adalah tidak signifikan ($r = .317, p > .05$). Perhubungan positif yang sederhana wujud bagi Program HRD ($r = .490, p < .01$) dan Program Kaunseling ($r = .537, p < .05$). Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa Kursus PBT2152: Techniques in ELT- Reading merupakan faktor terkuat yang mempengaruhi pencapaian para pelajar TESL/ ESL.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in the project are listed here in alphabetical order for easy reference by the reader, if there are many of these.

CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
ESL	English as Second Language
FCSHD	Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development
HRD	Human Resource and Development
MATH	Mathematics
TESL	Teaching English as Second Language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, overview of previous research, the need for more investigation, purpose of the study, research framework, operational definitions of terms and significance of the study.

1.1 SETTING OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Reading is an important skill that should be acquired by everybody in this world. Reading enables people to get new information and ideas, develop new philosophy and think maturely. Reading broadens people's mind and enable them to see the reality in different perspectives. Reading has the potential to civilize mankind.

In a developing country like Malaysia, reading plays important role in enlightening the society so that they become literate and information- rich society. Through the knowledge that is gathered from reading, the society can plan for their country development. They can formulate new agendas and come out with constructive strategies that can contribute to the nation building.

Reading is also important in an academic setting. This is because reading enables the students to get new information on the topic under study. With good reading skills, students will not have any difficulty in understanding whatever texts that are given for them. They can explore and understand the text easily.

Specific in tertiary education whereby the English is the medium of instruction, reading plays important role in predicting ESL students' success. Living in a setting which requires the students to deal with a lot of exhaustive materials in English, for example journal articles and textbooks, there is a need for the ESL university students to have high level of reading skills in order for them to be able to comprehend all the material. With good reading skills, ESL students will make greater progress in their study and successful in all academic fields that they go through.

However, high level of reading skills cannot be mastered in a short period. It must be practiced. One means of developing these skills is through extensive reading.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There are a lot of benefits that extensive reading offers. Extensive reading motivates students to read and promotes positive attitude towards reading. The exposure to the large amount of materials from various sources that are within students' level of proficiency is very motivating and enjoyable. They can always choose the book that interests them (Bell, 2001; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Ratnawati & Ismail, 2003).

Bell (2001) claims that extensive reading increases reading speed. This is because reading becomes easier when students read a lot, which results in fluency and improves the reading ability (Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Ratnawati & Ismail, 2003).

Extensive reading also develops fluent second language readers because extensive reading "enhances a large sight vocabulary, a wide general vocabulary and knowledge of the target language, the world, and text types" (Bamford & Day, 1998).

p. 16). By frequently reading materials from various sources, the readers get familiar with the words, and develop automaticity in recognizing the printed words. They will also incidentally learn new words from context of the text, hence resulting in enrichment of their vocabulary. They will also aware about the form and structure of the target language, and can acquire a lot of information.

Research also indicates that extensive reading is beneficial in improving comprehension (Bell, 2001; Leung, 2002; Robb & Susser, 1989). Through extensive reading, students are exposed to a body of information that is useful in activating their schemata, which is crucial for comprehension to take place.

1.3 NEED FOR MORE INVESTIGATION

Eventhough there are a lot of research on extensive reading had been done previously, most of them focused on its relationship with language learning. Few researches attempt to measure it in terms of academic context in university. Researches on the academic context usually focus on the reading habits in general. with the emphasis is on reading quantity, reading preferences and in term of affection. Very few of the researches focus on the relationship between extensive

reading and academic achievement in university. Therefore, this research on extensive reading and academic achievement in university will fill in the gap.

1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the study was to answer the research question:

Is there a relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement among the students of five programs in FCSHD generally, and specifically according to gender and programs differences?

1.4.1 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of this study were to find out:

- 1 Is there a relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement among the students of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL), Human Resource and Development (HRD), Mathematics (Math), Cognitive Science and Counseling Program in general?

2. Is there any difference in the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement among the male and female students of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL), Human Resource and Development (HRD), Mathematics (Math), Cognitive Science and Counseling Program?

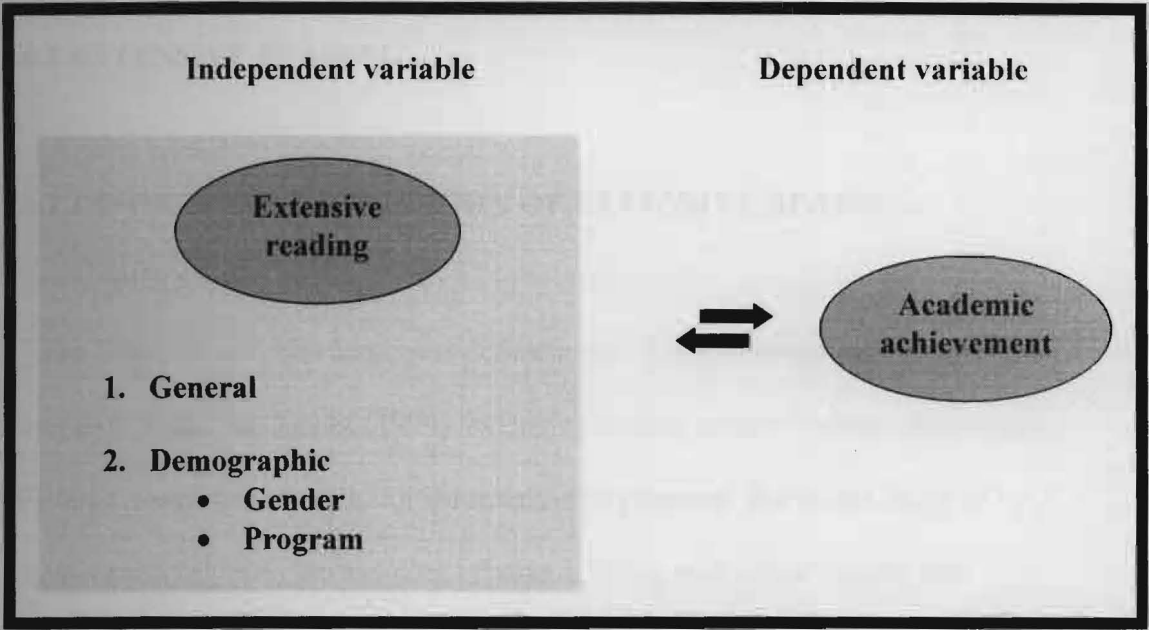
3. Is there any difference in the relationship between extensive reading and academic achievement among the Program of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL), Human Resource and Development (HRD), Mathematics (Math), Cognitive Science and Counseling?

4. Which factor that best predicts academic achievement of the TESL/ ESL students?

1.5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework for this study.

Figure 1. Research Framework



1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In this section, the definition of terms for this study will be presented.

1.6.1 EXTENSIVE READING

1.6.1.1 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF EXTENSIVE READING.

The literature provides numerous definitions of extensive reading. According to Renandya, Rajan and Jacobs (1999), extensive reading means “independent reading of a large quantity of material for information or pleasure. The prime focus of extensive reading is on the meaning of what is being read rather than on the language”. On the other hand, Bamford & Day (1998) simply defines extensive reading as the reading of a large amount of materials in the second language (p. 84). Jensen (1986) defines “Extensive Reading Component”.

“The Extensive Reading Component, an extension of the Core Reading Component’s materials, provides students with additional readings and exercises. The most important function of the Extensive Reading Component is to encourage more reading; the more students read the better readers they become (and the better they read, the more they enjoy the reading). Students may wish to pursue the theme of a core reading by reading additional material on the topic- for example, additional articles or even books, so the Extensive Reading Components provides additional information on the various thematic units” (p. 121).

1.6.1.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF EXTENSIVE READING.

From the definitions of extensive reading above, the operational definition of extensive reading for this study was drawn. For the purpose of this study, extensive reading means the score obtained in the extensive reading habits frequency questionnaire whereby the reading involves the reading of materials which are the extension of the core reading materials, which provides students with additional readings. The reading is done beyond the course requirement. The purpose of reading is to pursue the theme of a core reading and to gain additional information on the various thematic units.

1.6.2 FACTOR THAT BEST PREDICTS TESL/ ESL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

For the purpose of this study, factor that best predicts TESL/ ESL students' academic achievement means any one of the three variables which has the strongest relationship with academic achievement. The three variables are extensive reading, which is measured by score obtained in the extensive reading habits questionnaire, the Course PBI0052 English for Academic Purpose and the Course PBT2152 Techniques in ELT: Reading, in which both are measured in term of the grade obtained by the students.

The PBI0052 English for Academic Purpose Course and the PBT2152 Techniques in ELT- Reading Course are the courses that expose the students to the reading skills.

1.6.3 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement in this study means the latest CGPA (cumulative grade point average) obtained by the students in his/ her study throughout the semesters (University Malaysia Sarawak, 2005).

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Extensive reading is a mean to acquire knowledge, especially in the field of academic. Therefore, the results of this study can convince the teachers, educators, schools, universities, government, parents and students about the importance of extensive reading to academic success. The information from this study can act as a foundation for the above groups in planning, designing, supporting and implementing extensive reading in academic field. The results also can provide information about further needs for research in this field.

As conclusion, this chapter discusses the background of the study, overview of previous research, the need for more investigation, purpose of the study, research framework, operational definitions of terms and significance of the study. Next, in Chapter 2 there will be the literature review.